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General and complete disarmament

Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 67/37, entitled "Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control", the General Assembly invited all Members States to communicate to the Secretary-General information on the measures they have adopted to promote the objectives envisaged in the resolution, and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report containing that information to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

2. Pursuant to that request, on 25 February 2013, a note verbale was sent to Member States inviting them to provide information on the subject. The replies received thus far are contained in section II below. Additional replies received will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. Replies received from Governments

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[30 April 2013]

Protecting the environment is a priority for Cuba. Cuba has solid legal norms for the protection of the environment and natural resources, which are applied strictly by the competent bodies.

Cuba ensures strict compliance with these norms in all aspects of public life, including in the drafting and implementation of disarmament and arms control treaties to which it is a State party, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Cuba has many instruments to ensure that the environment is protected when implementing disarmament and arms control treaties and agreements to which it is a party, including:

- Article 27 of the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba, which contains the concept of sustainable development
- Act No. 81/1997 on the environment, which sets forth the principles underpinning Cuba's environmental policy
- Legislative Decree No. 207, entitled "On the use of nuclear energy", which establishes the general rules for such activities
- Decree No. 208, entitled "On the national accountability and control system for nuclear materials", which establishes the regulations for the operation of the system in question with the aim of contributing to the efficient management of such materials and detecting their unauthorized use, loss or movement
- The legal regime governing biosecurity and implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention, which is reflected in Legislative Decree No. 190/99, entitled "Biological security", in resolution No. 2/2004 of the Ministry of

Science, Technology and the Environment (CITMA), entitled "Regulation on accountability and control of biological materials, equipment and related technology", in the most recent update of the "List of biological agents that affect humans, animals and plants", and in the "Regulation granting authorizations in the field of biological security". The latter two are contained in CITMA resolutions Nos. 38/2006 and 180/2007, respectively

- Legislative Decree No. 202/1999, which regulates the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention at the national level
- Agreement No. 5517 of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers of 2005, entitled "On contraventions resulting from violation of the rules of the Chemical Weapons Convention", which rounded out the legislative measures needed to implement the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Cuba reaffirms the importance of strict observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of disarmament and arms control agreements. In international disarmament forums, full account should be taken of the relevant environmental norms in the negotiation of international treaties and agreements on disarmament and arms control.

Our country has acquired extensive experience in adopting and implementing laws and policies that enable it to observe environmental norms; however, the existence of weapons of mass destruction, their ongoing development and possible use are among the most serious threats to international peace and security, to the fragile environmental balance on our planet and to sustainable development for all peoples without distinction.

Of the nearly 19,000 nuclear weapons currently in existence, it would take no more than about a hundred to usher in a nuclear winter that would in a short space of time cause the death of all human beings and destroy the earth's environment.

Cuba reiterates its call for negotiations on a treaty for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons to begin without further delay, within a specified time frame and under strict international control. An international treaty on nuclear disarmament must of necessity include measures for the protection of the environment.

The Chemical Weapons Convention continues to be the only international agreement that provides for the verifiable destruction of weapons of mass destruction and the facilities where they are produced, and that includes measures for the protection of humans and the environment.

Strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention through a multilaterally negotiated, legally binding protocol is critical to the protection of the environment and the preservation of biodiversity on our planet.

The only effective solution that can prevent the dire consequences of the use of weapons of mass destruction remains the total elimination of such weapons.

It is important to highlight the relevance and importance of the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques, ratified by Cuba on 10 April 1978, which remains fully in force.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]
[23 April 2013]

Lebanon possesses no weapons that have an impact on or are detrimental to the environment and supports the agreements on disarmament, arms control and the observance of environmental norms. It is, however, deeply concerned by Israel's possession and maintenance of a huge arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, which could be very harmful to the environment, even if they are not used.

Qatar

[Original: Arabic]
[21 May 2013]

The State of Qatar possesses only conventional weapons that are allowed under international standards, and only the minimum quantity needed for national defence in the light of the international and regional situation. The State of Qatar is working to improve the efficiency of weapons maintenance and training in order to prolong their use and obviate the need for additional weapons.

An environmental safety division has been established in the Qatari Armed Forces. It has been given responsibility for several environmental functions, including monitoring the application of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament, through the following measures:

(a) Putting in place environmental requirements and standards for the Armed Forces and monitoring their application;

(b) Participating in all committees for the formulation of military exercises and training in order to monitor the application of environmental standards before, during and after such exercises;

(c) Overseeing the disposal of ammunition in order to ensure the application of environmental standards and putting in place environmentally friendly procedures for that purpose;

(d) Overseeing all shooting activities carried out by military units.